

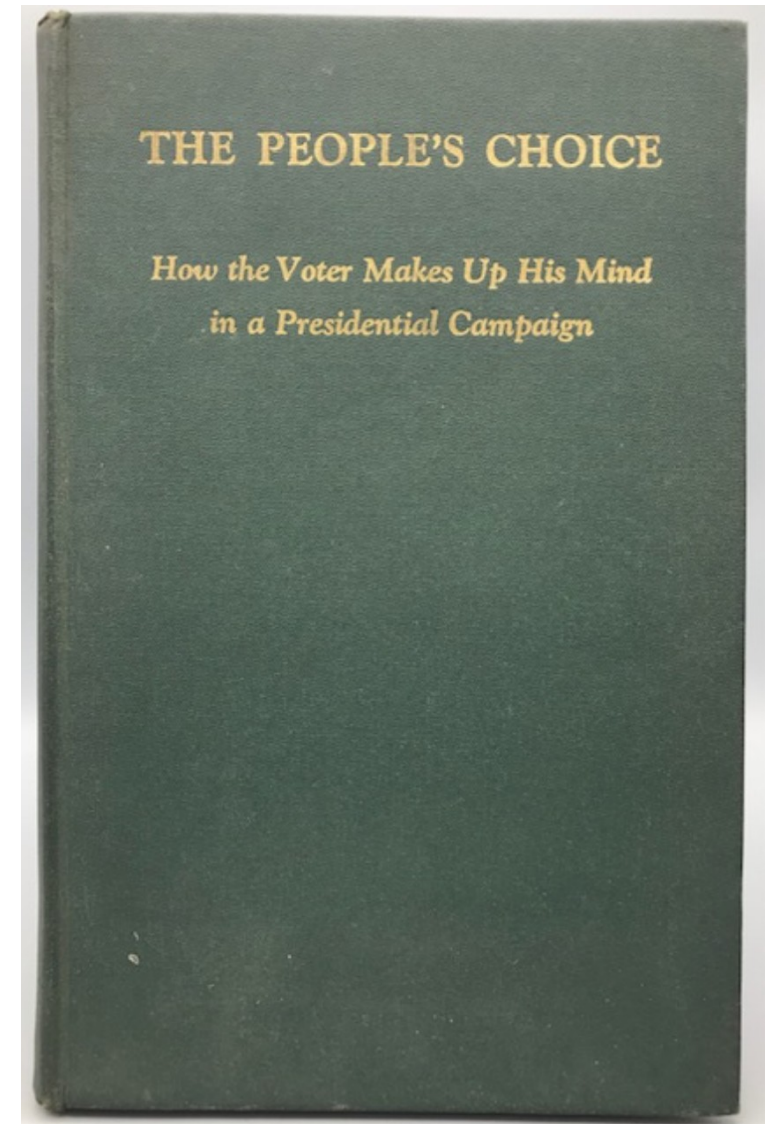
Why do we study voting behavior?

- Why is it a big deal?
- Who should be interested?
- How is voting related to democracy?
- Are there any assumptions that we hold about voters?



Sociological theory of voting

- Lazarsfeld, Berelson & Gaudet 1944
- Eire county, questionnaires
- Mechanisms of voting decision
- Panel (7 waves)
- Hypothesis: personality and media
- Not supported!
- Main effects: social groups one belongs to



Sociological theories

An illustration showing three hands of different skin tones (dark brown, light tan, and dark brown) dropping red ballot papers into a red ballot box. The ballot box is labeled 'VOTE' in large, bold, white letters. The background is a solid light blue color.

- Majority of voters voted according their original position
- Strong correlation of social groups and voting
- Index of Political Predisposition: socio-economic status, religion, area of residence
- *„ a person thinks, politically, as he is, socially. Social characteristics determine political preference.“*
- Undecided, switching voters = pressures from community
- Campaign effect: activation, reinforcement (53%), conversion (8%)
- Personal contact, two-step-flow
- *“In a way, the content of this chapter can be summarized by saying that people vote, not only with their social group, but also for it”*

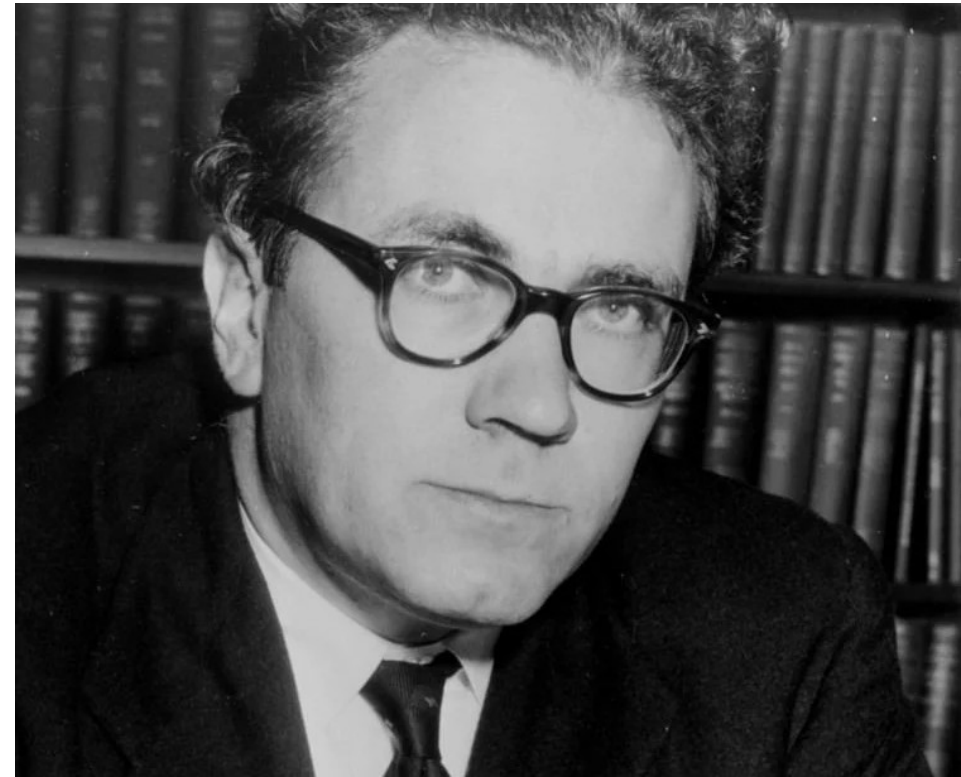
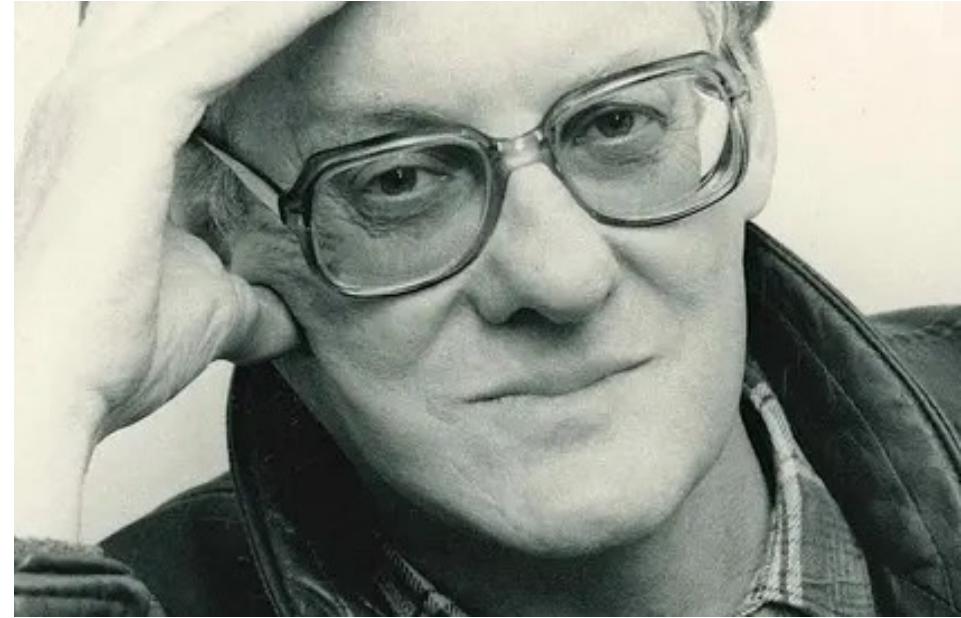
Voting (1954)

- 1943 election, Elmira study
- Differentiation, transmission, contact
- Predispositions: socio-economic status, race, religion, area of residence
- Crosspressure
- Subjects who move away will eventually return
- To the “natural” position of their soc. group (reactivation)
- How does their findings fit the democratic theory?



Cleavage theory (Rokkan and Lipset 1967)

- Macro-sociological explanation
- Society segmented into groups based on cleavages
- Deep conflicts in societies that materialize in political parties
- Alignment of one's identities with the social group represented by a party
- Cleavages defined by national revolutions and industrial revolution
- State vs. Church and Center vs. Periphery
- Urban vs. Rural and Capital vs. Labor
- Party systems frozen (1920s-1960s)





Cleavages and voting

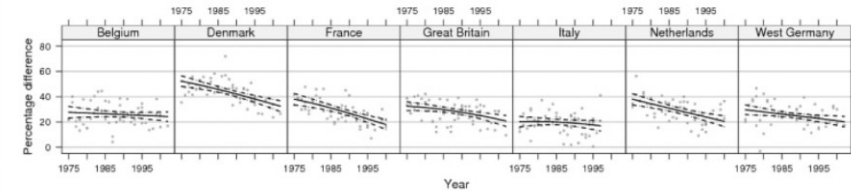
- Social predisposition to vote for parties (socialists, conservatives or liberals, Christian democrats, conservatives, regional parties etc.)
- But what is a cleavage?!!!
 - Social structure
 - Psychology
 - Organizational aspect
- Debates: Is there a decline of cleavage voting?
Can cleavages change?

Social Structure and Electoral Behavior in Comparative Perspective: The Decline of Social Cleavages in Western Europe Revisited

Martin Eloff

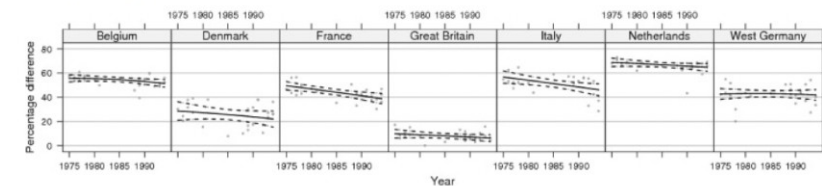
- Decline of class based and religious voting in W. Europe 1975-2002?
- Not clearly, heterogenous
- Most visible in France and Denmark
- New issues adopted by parties

Figure 4
Class differences regarding the support for labor parties, working class versus self-employed, 1975–2002



Note: The period of observation is 1975–2000 for France and the Netherlands and 1975–1997 for Italy.

Figure 5
Differences between weekly churchgoers and non-churchgoers regarding the support for Christian parties, 1975–1994



Transformation of the political space: A citizens’ perspective

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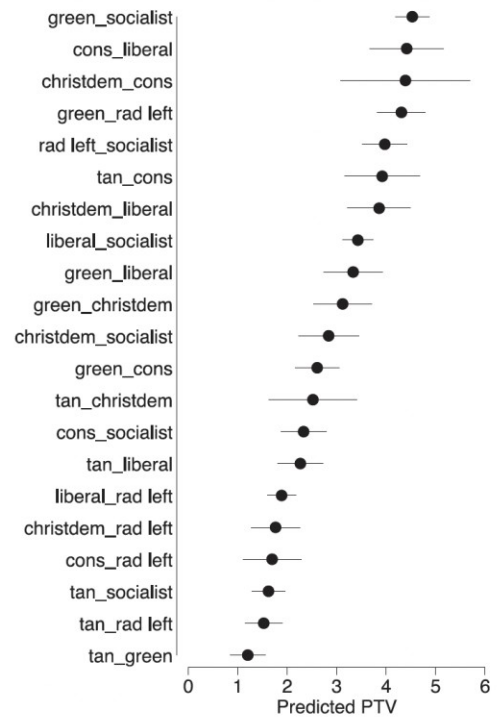


Figure 3. Predicted PTV by party family dyad.
 Note: EES data for 2019. Circles indicate the predicted PTV level for all voters. Estimates obtained from the OLS estimation with country fixed effects and cluster standard errors by respondent and country (reported in Supporting Information Appendix I). Spikes indicate 95 per cent confidence intervals.

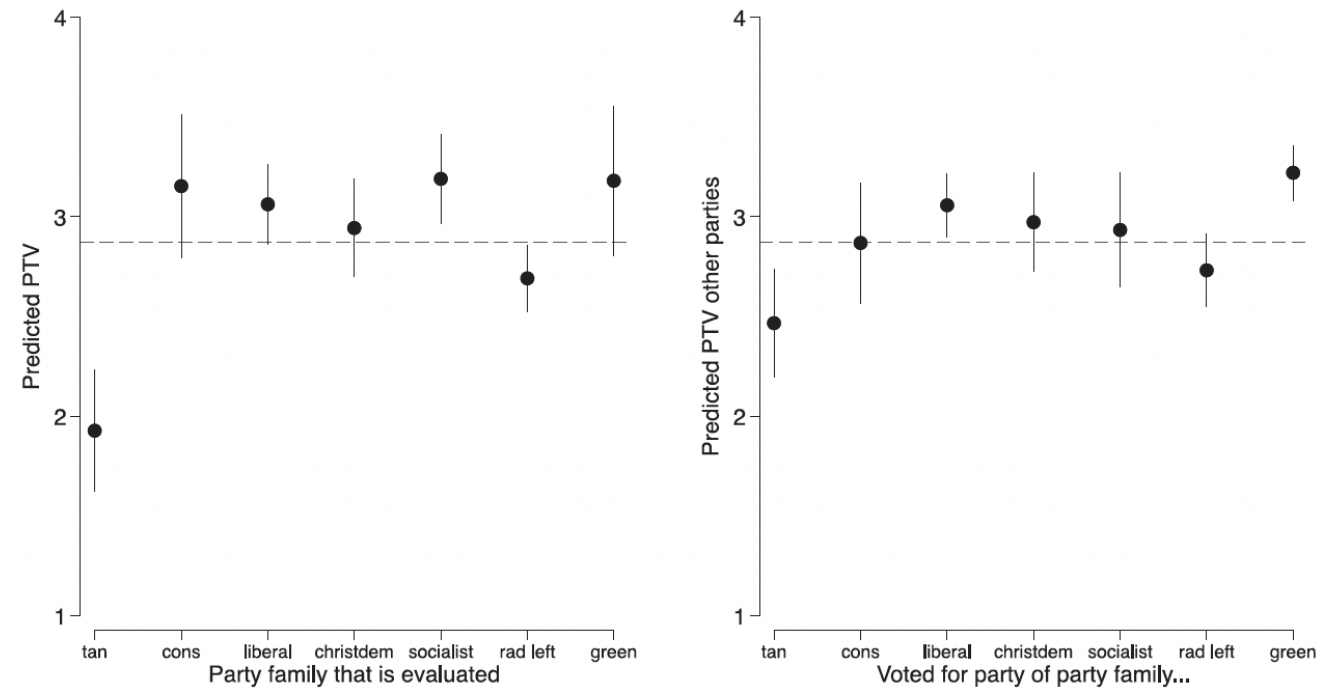


Figure 4. Predicted vote propensity (PTV) for party families and their voters.
 Note: EES data for 2019. Left panel = how voters from other party families evaluate a particular party family; right panel = how a particular party family constituency evaluates political parties in other party families. OLS regression with country dummies and cluster standard errors by respondent and country. Spikes indicate 95 per cent confidence intervals. The dashed horizontal line indicates the sample average.

Table 1. Explaining PTV with ideological distance between party voted and party evaluated, pooled data

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Economic LR distance	-0.297*** (0.039)		-0.258*** (0.042)
GAL-TAN distance		-0.252*** (0.025)	-0.212*** (0.032)
Country FE	yes	Yes	yes
Year FE	yes	Yes	yes
Constant	3.567*** (0.166)	3.261*** (0.097)	3.995*** (0.219)
N	178101	178101	178101
R2	0.056	0.052	0.075

Note: EES 1999, 2009, 2014 and 2019 survey data for 14 countries. Estimates from OLS estimations with country and year fixed effects (not shown) and cluster standard errors by respondent and country. PTVs for a voter’s own party are not included. Significance levels: *p < 0.05, **p < 0.01, ***p < 0.001.



Psychological model of voting

- Michigan (1948, 52, 56) Survey Research Center -> Center of Political Studies (ANES)
- Campbell, Converse, Miller, Stokes (1960) *The American Voter*
- Political partisanship, party ID
- Psychological, affective affinity, stable, long-lasting
- Not the same as vote choice!
- Socialization processes

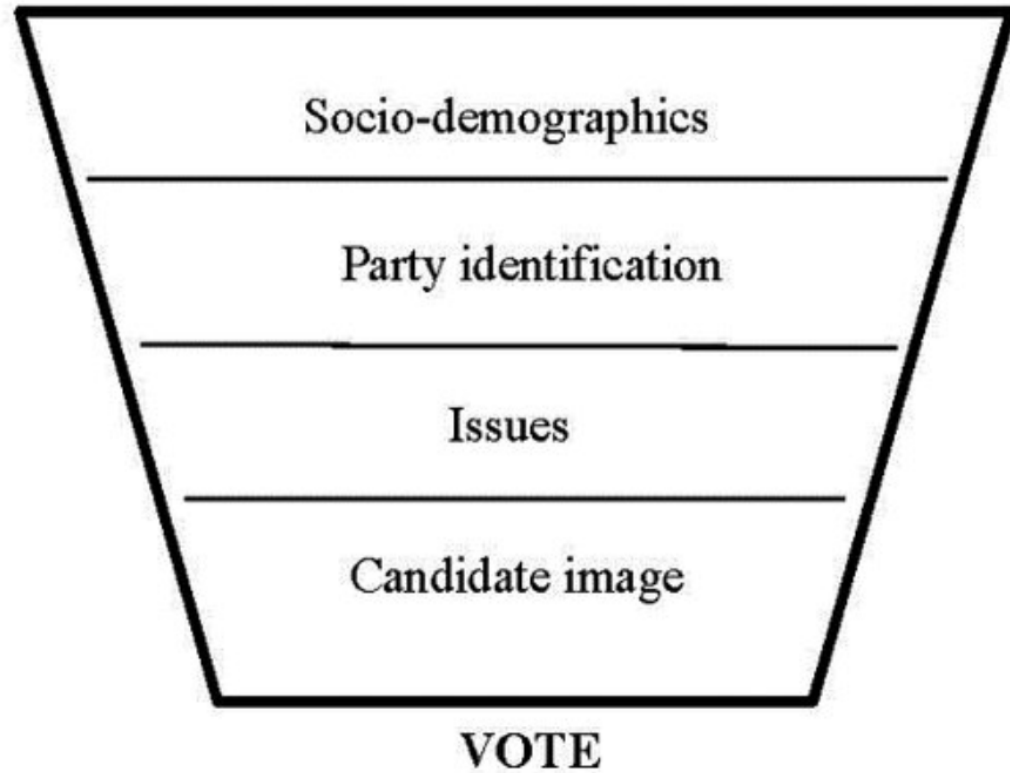
“Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?”

“Would you call yourself a strong (Republican, Democrat) or a not very strong (Republican, Democrat)?”

- Perceptual filter



Funnel of causality



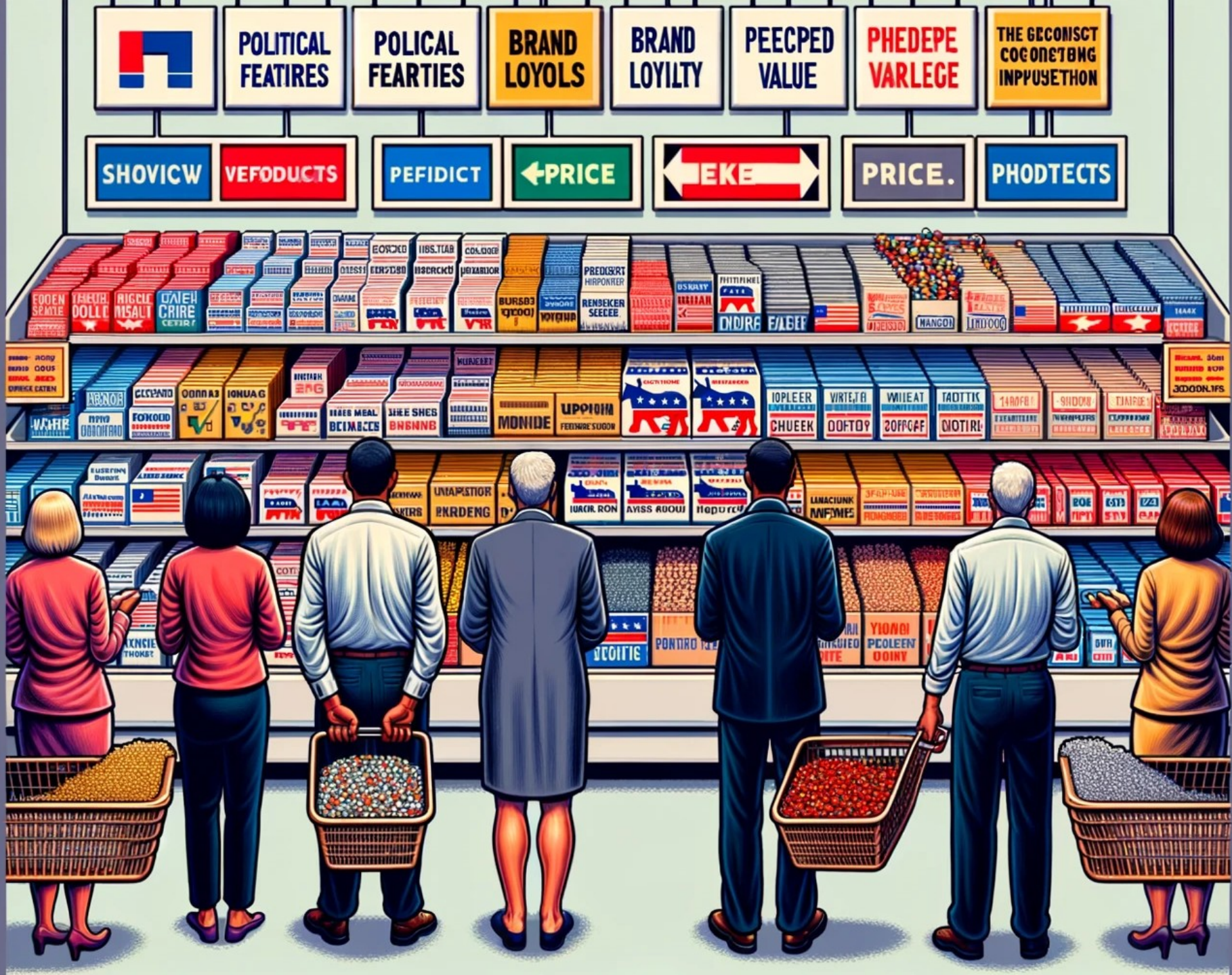
Distal factors

Proximal factors

Criticism: proximal over distal factors?

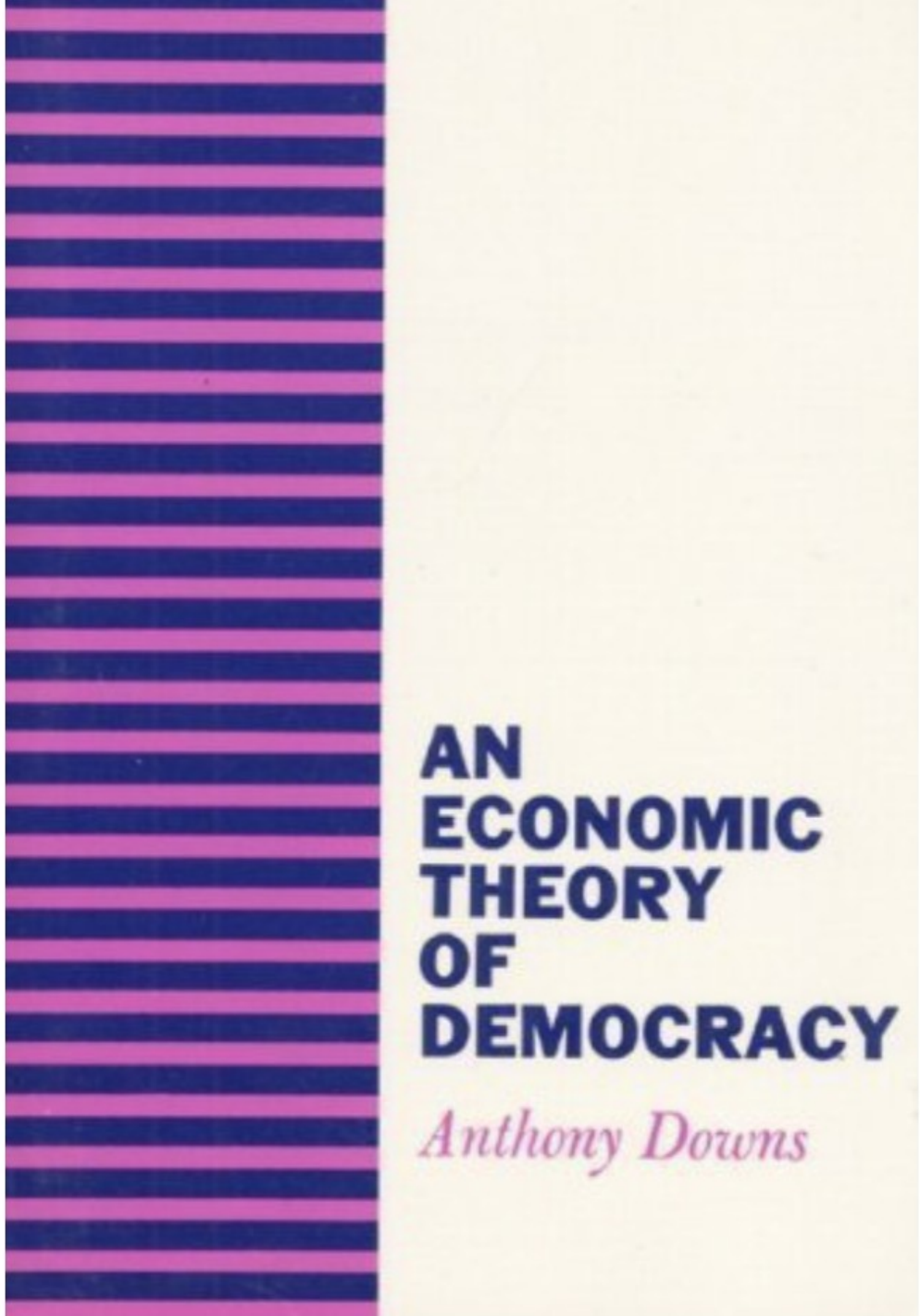
- Why some voters switch votes?
- How to explain voting for another party?

- Role of proximal factors
- Evaluation of parties/candidates in every elections
- Parties as a cue not identity



Rational choice theory

- Anthony Downs (1957) *Economic Theory of Democracy*
- Analogy between market and politics
- Voters as consumers and political actors as enterprises
- Assumption of rationality
- Self-interest, maximization of utility
- Rationality? Logics? Information?
- Goal of parties: win elections
- Goal of voters: government of the party closest to them



**AN
ECONOMIC
THEORY
OF
DEMOCRACY**

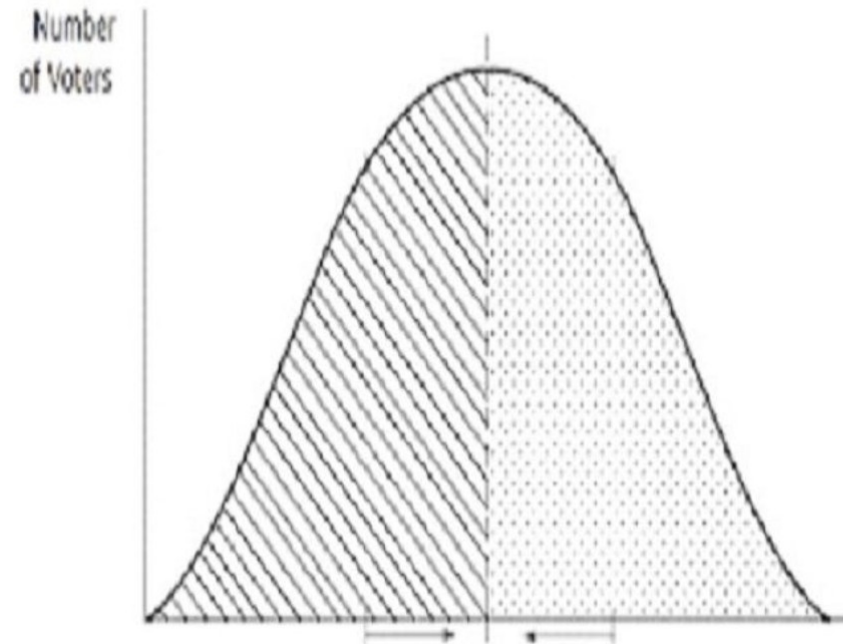
Anthony Downs

Rational theory of voting

- Consistency
 - Preferences ordered $A > B > C$
 - Rational subjects compare them
 - How do voters calculate the expected value??
 - Consistency of parties (ideology)
- Uncertainty
 - If parties maximize votes, how come they are not the same?
 - Various social groups with various interests
 - One dominant vs niche parties
- Spatial representation

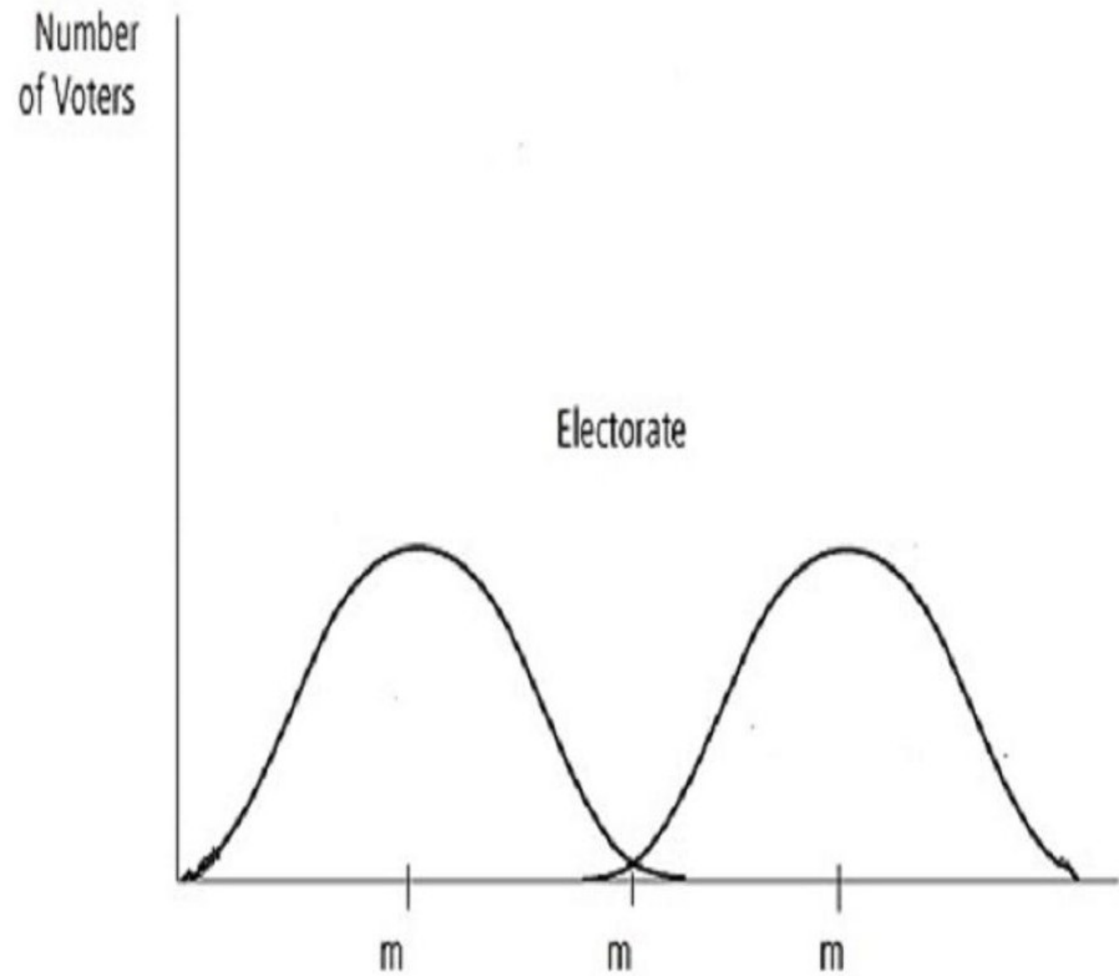
Spatial representation

- Politics as a political space
- Role of policy but in left-right dimension
- Parties place themselves where they can maximize votes
- Hotelling's economic theory applied to politics (icecream stands)
- Parties follow voter distribution (modes of voters)
- Median voter theorem
- In two-party system parties gravitate to the center



Spatial representation

- But what if there are two modes?



Strategic vote

- Voting – belief in effectiveness of such act
- How rational is it to vote???

- What if the party which brings you biggest utility has no chances of winning?
- Risk of victory of the party considered undesirable
- How big is the risk and how much my vote matters?

Criticism

- Blais (2000)
 - *“unfortunately for the theory, many people do vote. In fact, a clear majority vote in the most important elections, where the numbers of voters is extremely large and the probability of casting a decisive vote is minuscule”* (p. 2).
- Green, Shapiro (1994). Criticize the method (theory not based on evidence)
- Do voters possess information to make rational choices?

The classical approaches

A black and white photograph showing several hands holding white papers. The hands are positioned around the edges of the frame, with one hand at the top left, one at the top right, one at the bottom left, and one at the bottom right. A stack of papers is visible at the bottom center. The background is a solid red color.

- Sociological
- Psychological
- Economic
- Complement each other
- What are the weaknesses of each one of them?
- Do the others explain it better?



What do you think?